

THE

COMMON SCHOOL JOURNAL.

VOL. VII. BOSTON, NOVEMBER 15, 1845. No. 22.

BOSTON GRAMMAR AND WRITING SCHOOLS.

[Continued from page 336.]

WE now proceed to make a few extracts from the Annual Report of the Committee on the Writing Department.

The committee, who were directed to make the annual examination of the several Writing Schools, respectfully

REPORT:

That they have visited all the schools, now numbering nineteen, and have endeavored, from personal examination, to learn their present condition, and to ascertain how far this branch of our system of instruction answers the just expectations of the public.

By the present organization of the schools, five are exclusively for girls, six for boys, and eight for girls and boys. The girls are allowed to attend from seven years of age till the next annual exhibition after they shall have arrived to the age of sixteen. The boys leave two years earlier. Sixteen of the schools are divided into two departments, called the Grammar and Writing departments, between which the pupil's time is equally divided. Practically these divisions constitute separate schools, for each has its distinct teachers, and each is perfectly independent of the other. The only claim which the two departments have to any connection, is in the fact that the same pupils are half of the time in each, and are half of the time absent from each, and that both departments are called by the same name. In the Lyman, New South, and Smith schools, this division has not been made.

* * * *

The committee were required to examine the first class only, and in most cases they limited their inquiries to this class. This generally constitutes about one fifth part of the school, and is composed of children between the ages of eleven and sixteen. It is believed that the average age of the first class in all the schools is about twelve or thirteen years. The first division of this class, which generally comprises from one fifth to a quarter of the whole, averages about fourteen years. The studies pur-

sued are, Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, Writing and Book-keeping. * * * * Algebra and Geometry are not made necessary by the rules, but are permitted in such cases as are thought expedient. For this reason Algebra is studied in only about two thirds of them, and Geometry in only two, viz., the Hancock and Bowdoin.

From thirty minutes to one hour, each day, is devoted to writing by all the pupils of each class. In most of the schools one hour is spent in this way. Printed or engraved copies are generally used, though in many cases, for the younger children, they are written by the teacher. Writing books and pens are furnished by the teacher, and paid for by the pupils at a fixed price.

* * * * *

In Arithmetic, they, [the committee,] examined the pupils by submitting printed questions for their solution, and also by propounding questions orally.

* * * * *

The written examination in Arithmetic was adopted in all the schools except the Smith. It was limited to the first division of the first class, which varied in numbers from four to twenty-six. The committee prepared ten questions for solution, on a variety of subjects, and caused them to be printed on a single sheet, leaving between each a sufficient blank space to enable the pupils to record the process of solution. The same questions were submitted to all the schools, and the pupils were required to lay aside their books and slates, and work out the process on the paper itself. One hour and ten minutes were allowed them, at the expiration of which, all the papers were returned to the committee, whether the questions were solved or not. It was not expected that any considerable number could work out all the sums in so short a time, but it was thought expedient to propose such questions that even those who had made the greatest advancement might find employment during the allotted period. It was also intended to have these questions embrace such a variety of subjects as to require a pretty thorough knowledge of the whole science of arithmetic to give the right answers to them all.

The questions submitted are as follows:

1. How much is $\frac{1}{2}$ of $\frac{1}{3}$ of 9 hours and 18 minutes?
2. What part of 100 acres is 63 acres, 2 roods and 7 rods?
3. What is the quotient of one ten thousandth, divided by ten thousand? Express the answer in decimal and vulgar fractions.
4. A stationer sold quills at 10s. 6d. per thousand, by which he cleared $\frac{1}{4}$ of the price,—but the quills growing scarce, he raised the price to 12s. per thousand. What per cent. would he clear by the latter price?
5. Suppose A owes me \$100 due at the end of 3 months, and \$100 due at the end of nine months, and he agrees to give me a note for \$200 payable at such a time that its present worth shall be the same as the sum of the present value of the two

first mentioned notes. How long after date must this note be made payable?

6. A man has a square piece of ground which contains one quarter of one acre and a quarter, on which are trees, which will make wood enough to form a pile around on the inside of the bounds of the land 3 feet high and 4 feet wide. How many cords of wood are there?

7. A sold goods for \$1,500, to be paid for one half in six months, and one half in 9 months. What is the present worth of the goods, interest being at 7 per cent.?

8. A merchant in New York, where interest is 7 per cent., gives his note, dated at Boston, where the interest is 6 per cent., for \$5,000, payable at the Merchants' Bank, Boston, on demand. Thirty days after the date of the note demand is made. A year after demand \$200 are paid on the note. What sum remains due at the end of two years from the date of the note?

9. What is the square root of $\frac{5}{8}$ of $\frac{4}{5}$ of $\frac{3}{4}$ of $\frac{7}{8}$?

10. The city of Boston has 120,000 inhabitants, half males, and its property liable to taxation is one hundred millions. It levies a poll tax of $\frac{2}{3}$ of a dollar each on one half of its male population. It taxes income to the amount of \$50,000, and its whole tax is \$770,000. What should a man pay whose taxable property amounts to \$100,000?

The whole number of children belonging to the schools at the time of the examination was 8,343, of whom 308, comprising the best scholars in each school, were examined in this manner.

Two hundred and eighty-nine gave a correct answer to No. 1; two hundred and eighty-two to No. 2; one hundred and seventy to No. 3; nine to No. 4; none to No. 5, though one hundred and twenty-six gave the same answer, viz., six months, which is nearly correct; two to No. 6, both of whom belonged to the Mather School; one hundred and forty-seven to No. 7; none to No. 8; one hundred and seventy-four to No. 9; and one,—Miss Frances A. Lathrop, of the Hawes school,—to No. 10. A considerable number gave different answers to No. 4, but only nine gave the correct one, two of whom belonged to the Adams school, one to the Johnson, and six to the Winthrop. The result in each school may be seen in the following table:

Schools.	No. belonging to schools.	No. in first class.	No. of pupils examined.	The result of the examination; the figures 1, 2, 3, &c. indicating the No. of the question, below which is stated the number of correct answers.										Average age of the pupils in each school.
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Eliot,	470	80	24	24	24	13	0	0	0	5	0	13	0	13 6-12
Adams,	420	72	17	17	17	9	2	0	0	10	0	4	0	13 2-12
Franklin,	411	40	12	11	12	6	0	0	0	11	0	7	0	14 10-12
Mayhew,	373	54	17	17	15	4	0	0	0	4	0	4	0	13 10-12
Hawes,	424	52	20	20	20	5	0	0	0	5	0	11	1	14 4-12
Boylston,	547	101	26	26	26	26	0	0	0	19	0	16	0	15 1-12

Schools.	No. Schol-ars.	No. in first class.	No. exam-ined.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Age.
Bowdoin,	511	143	19	19	19	18	0	0	0	11	0	11	0	15 4-12
Hancock,	549	100	23	21	21	1	0	0	0	6	0	22	0	14 7-12
Wells,	445	77	20	20	20	19	0	0	0	13	0	20	0	15
Johnson,	504	113	16	15	13	9	1	0	0	5	0	5	0	15
Winthrop,	553	81	20	20	19	13	6	0	0	16	0	14	0	13 10-12
Lyman,	380	41	10	10	10	10	0	0	0	7	0	9	0	14
Endicott,	518	81	22	22	17	11	0	0	0	13	0	11	0	13 6-12
Mather,	485	59	11	11	11	4	0	0	2	11	0	10	0	15
Brimmer,	532	40	15	11	10	5	0	0	0	1	0	5	0	14 6-12
Phillips,	450	59	13	11	12	8	0	0	0	3	0	6	0	13 2-12
Otis,	472	37	19	10	12	6	0	0	0	7	0	6	0	14
Smith,	163													
New South,	136		4	4	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13 3-12
			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	

Of the comparative rank of the several schools, the committee have said all they think necessary. Improvements may be made in them all, and in a city which has always been distinguished for its generous efforts in the cause of popular education, it is not becoming to lag behind, and follow at a distance and with reluctant step, the modern movement in this great cause. The preëminence of Boston in a matter so philanthropic, so just, and withal so economical as the education of the whole people, must be preserved. To promote this object, there is no lack of appropriations. The city give all that can reasonably be asked, and more than any other city in the world in proportion to its means. More than two hundred thousand dollars were paid last year for the support of schools and the building of schoolhouses, of which about one hundred and twenty thousand were paid in salaries to instructors. During the present year appropriations have been made for similar purposes, to the amount of \$212,600. Of this, \$127,000 are appropriated to the payment of salaries. Add to this the interest on the amount expended in schoolhouses and owned by the city, and the whole expense paid by the city for schools and schoolhouses the present year will exceed \$250,000, being an amount equal to one third of the whole city tax. With such generous appropriations for popular education what cannot be effected? Let this amount be economically expended in schools properly organized, with able, efficient and zealous teachers, rejoicing in the duties and labors of their honorable and responsible profession, and inspired with a love of promoting the moral and intellectual progress of their race, and such an advance would be made in popular education in our city, as not only to bring joy to the heart of the Christian and philanthropist, but to make even the money calculator proud of the preëminence, the intellect, and moral power of our people.

It has been said by one of our own distinguished citizens, that the influence of New England in our widely extended country must hereafter depend, not on its numbers, but on carrying forward and extending our system of popular education, in developing the intellect and promoting the moral character of the whole people. Of the truth of this there can be no doubt,

and equally true is it that the past influence of New England has depended on the same cause; that to this are due her early triumphs in sustaining and extending her settlements, her successful vindication of her rights, and, above all, her preservation of a truly republican government.

The committee do not intend to say anything in derogation of the present masters of our schools, but, on the other hand, to the meritorious efforts and success of many of them, they cheerfully bear testimony. There are some cases where they think there is a want of the proper spirit, as well as the proper faculty to teach. Such, however, are exceptions, and are not very numerous.

Much of the improvement in the schools necessarily depends on the teachers. Elegant schoolhouses and princely appropriations do but little without the teacher who has a sufficient capacity and a proper spirit. If we employ a teacher whose efforts are to be limited to the use of means necessary to retain his place and get his salary, not much can be expected from him beyond that. He may get his salary, but he does not earn it: Nay, he does greater injustice than that. He deprives those committed to his charge of the benefit of that instruction, which, by accepting the office, he pledged himself to give. He commits a double wrong,—in the first place to the public, and, in the second place, by doing an irreparable injury to his pupils. Upon the teachers it must, in a great degree, depend whether the pupils shall confine their acquisitions to the letter and rules of the text book, or whether they shall understand the principles of the studies they pursue.

In this respect there is a most striking difference in our schools. In some the pupils seem to understand what they have studied, and to know how to apply it to the cases which may arise; in others they can repeat rules with great fluency and accuracy, answer printed questions in arithmetic, while the book is before them, and in fact recite all their set lessons in the book in a manner which would seem to do them great credit. When, however, these landmarks are thrown aside, and they are called to the black-board and requested to answer questions not found in the book, and for which they have no prescribed rules, they come to a dead stand, and lose the whole skill which before they apparently exhibited.

It seems to the committee that this latter mode of instruction is quite too prevalent in some of the schools; that the pupils learn rules rather than principles, and that the text books are made quite too much their guide. It is believed that no school can be very successful while this plan is adhered to, that a good and sufficient education will not be acquired by keeping within the pages of text books, and that no person can be a successful teacher without constant instruction in the principles and application of the studies pursued.

* * * * *

There is another topic for the improvement of the schools which the committee beg leave to refer to the consideration of this Board. Each of the schools is divided into two depart-

ments, or, in other words, into two schools. Unless there is an advantage in this system of greater weight than its manifest disadvantages, it ought to be abolished. It is an anomaly in the school system of this Commonwealth, and exists hardly beyond sixteen of the Grammar and Writing schools in Boston. It is exceedingly expensive, and more so than it need be. This is worthy of consideration, and should not be allowed unless its advantages are manifest. The committee are not aware what are the arguments of the advocates of the present system. They can see no substantial good arising from it, while, on the other hand, it is attended with great inconvenience and evil. Every pupil who attends these schools attends two schools, at the same time. He has two masters, under whose influence he is acquiring an education. One he visits in the forenoon, and the other in the afternoon. If he neglects one, the other knows nothing about it. One may instruct him in rules, the other in principles. One may adopt one course of conduct toward him, and the other a different course. One may deal in corporal punishment, and the other govern by the use of other means. The pupil always makes a comparison between them, and is very likely to entertain towards them different feelings.

But the great difficulty in the system is a proper distribution of studies between the two departments. By the present rules nothing but Writing and Arithmetic is required in the writing department. Some may avail themselves of the study of Algebra, Geometry and Book-keeping, but they are few, and are confined to the most advanced pupils. One half of the time is given by all the rest to Writing and Arithmetic, and this without any regard to sex, age, or acquirements.

The girl at seven and sixteen gives the same time to these studies. From one half to an hour in each day is devoted to writing, so that two hours or two hours and a half are set apart for Arithmetic during the seven or nine years that the pupils may remain in school. The rules give the masters no discretion in this matter, and the child who studies nothing but oral Arithmetic, and who, in fact, can learn nothing except during the recitation, is compelled to spend two or two and a half hours in this way. The committee do not doubt that the older pupils may spend this time in the study of Arithmetic profitably, but they believe that with the younger it is not only partially lost, but tends to weary and disgust them.

* * * * *

In the schools exclusively for girls or boys, a division is made into classes, according to their attainments in one or the other department, and if the principle be rightly carried out, there must be frequent changes from one class to the other. The higher classes belong to one department, and the lower classes to the other, and all influence of the one on the other, whether for good or evil, is wholly lost. In the mixed schools a different rule prevails. In them the boys constitute one department, and the girls the other,—so that there is a first class of boys as well as of girls in each, and the master in each department is compelled to repeat his course of instruction every day. Many

of the evils would be avoided by abolishing this system, and establishing in its stead a system which has for each school but one head master, who should be responsible for the instruction, management and discipline of the whole school. Let the school then be divided so as to give him all the older children, whom he should instruct in all the branches taught in the schools, and to each of whom he should give such attention as should be thought for their good.

Such assistants might be employed to take charge of the younger classes as the condition of each school required. In the girls' schools, and perhaps in all, the services of several male teachers might be dispensed with, and in their stead females could be employed as assistants, who, it is believed, would be equally, if not more efficient and successful teachers of the young.

Your committee cannot refrain from saying a few words on the subject of medals, as prizes for scholarship, &c. Much has been written for and against the principle of emulation as an incentive to diligence and intellectual development, and it would seem, from the fact that prizes are multiplying in our schools, through the munificence of individuals, that competition is the acknowledged principle of our school system, that it constitutes its life, as it does of business. Your committee cannot but express their regret if the fact is as it appears. They could wish the whole plan abolished, as presenting low and unworthy motives, where the noblest only should govern, and where the noblest, if presented, would be found the most powerful; and as introducing rivalries, jealousies and heart-burnings, not only into the schools, but into families and social circles. It would need only that one should attend an examination for the awarding of medals to be convinced of the essential evils of the system.

To witness the anxiety, the feverish excitement of mind and body, preventing frequently the most meritorious scholars from doing justice to themselves, the crushing sense of a false shame at a mistake or temporary absence of memory; the starting tear of a modest, worthy and diligent girl at the forced consciousness of her inferiority in the eager race,—would lead all of any sensibility, as it has your committee, to deprecate the system, and to pray it may be no further extended by private or public bounty, but curtailed in every possible manner, if it may not be utterly abolished.

The committee have referred to most of the topics which seem to require consideration. They submit their recommendations and opinion with diffidence, and with no other view than to promote the good and growth of our system of public instruction. They believe it is capable of great improvement, and though they may differ with others in the means which shall be adopted, yet they will yield to none in their ardent wishes for the attainment of so desirable an end. They have acquired a new interest in our public schools, by the somewhat laborious examinations which they have been required to make, and they hope and trust that the system of popular education,

first established in our Commonwealth, and steadily sustained even in the most trying periods of her history, will be improved until every child in the country is educated, and made capable of using, for the best purposes, the powers which God has given him.

WILLIAM BRIGHAM,
J. I. T. COOLIDGE,
HIRAM A. GRAVES.

Having now made copious extracts from the late Reports of the committees who were appointed to examine the Boston Grammar and Writing Schools; and having, in the last number of the Journal, presented our views respecting the excellences of the *method* adopted by those committees,—a method which we trust will be copied in other parts of the State and country,—we proceed to submit some observations on the *results* of that examination. That the facts disclosed by the Reports, have spread through the city a general and deep feeling of sorrow and mortification, no one will be so presumptuous as to deny. Sad indeed would it be, if this feeling should die away without producing a reform.

We have no wish to blazon abroad the defects of these schools; but if this occasion should not be made use of, for admonition and warning, the calamity of their present condition would not only be gratuitously suffered, but it might be perpetuated for years to come. If there is anything in the institutions of the city, or in the character of its inhabitants, to which we have always referred with a feeling of exultation, it is the heartiness and the bounteousness with which our noble system of Free Schools has been sustained by the popular voice. In no city in the world, has there been one half so much pecuniary liberality for the maintenance of Common Schools, as in the city of Boston. In no city in the world, have the generous appropriations made in behalf of the schools, been seconded and advocated by the citizens with so great a degree of unanimity. In no city in the world, have the wealthy and the childless made so little clamor or opposition, in regard to that great fundamental principle of Republicanism,—that the property of the country must secure the education of the country. It is an extraordinary fact that, for the last six or eight years, the annual appropriations of money for the support of Public Schools, in the city of Boston, with its eighty thousand, its one hundred thousand, or its one hundred and twenty thousand inhabitants, has constantly kept in advance of the appropriations made by the Parliament of Great Britain, in behalf of Popular Education, for all England, with its sixteen, seventeen, and now, as it is supposed, its eighteen millions of people. When the Parliament granted £20,000 for all England, Boston granted more than \$100,000. When the Parliament rose to £30,000, Boston had risen to more than \$150,000; and now, when the Parliament, in spite of the opposition of lords and bishops, has strained itself up to £40,000, the appropriations of the city of Boston are more than \$212,000. By far the largest item in this expenditure is

for the Grammar and Writing Schools. The salaries of all the teachers of the Primary Schools, where there are about 8000 children, are less, in the aggregate, than \$30,000; while the salaries of the teachers of the Grammar and Writing Schools, where there are but about the same number of children, amount to more than \$77,000. With some half dozen exceptions, the salaries paid to the Grammar and Writing Masters, are the only competent salaries paid to public school teachers, in any part of the Commonwealth. And we devoutly hope the time may never come when these salaries shall be less. It is true that there is an immense disproportion between the salaries of these masters, and the average paid to the male teachers in the Commonwealth,—the latter being at the rate of \$32.11 only per month, while the former is at the rate of \$125 per month,—almost four times as much, besides including all their vacations, and paying for them as for term time. The disproportion is still more flagrantly impolitic and unjust between the salaries paid to the masters and those paid to the female teachers of the city,—the former receiving six times as much as the latter. Still, if this unjustifiable inequality is to be diminished, let it be done, we say, by raising the compensation of the other teachers, and not by diminishing that of the masters so much as one penny. These views respecting the salaries of the Boston masters, we have always maintained, and we can imagine no combination of circumstances, within the range of probability, which will induce us to abandon them. When, some years ago, a reduction of these salaries was seriously threatened, we acted with all promptitude and earnestness, in endeavoring to avert so disastrous a measure, and though we may have had no influence in warding off the attack, we have at least the satisfaction of having striven to do so. But, in return for the generous salaries paid to the masters, a generous education should be given to the children. The money is not raised to be squandered upon place-holders, but, by a glorious alchemy, to be transmuted into intelligence, good feelings and good habits. It surely was not to be expected beforehand, that, in other towns, whose teachers were receiving a far inferior compensation, and where an improved system of schools had been but recently organized, the pupils would be found to be far superior to the pupils in the Boston Schools. Yet such is proved to be the fact; and it has filled the intelligent citizens of Boston,—those who have the interests of the schools most deeply at heart, and who are not blinded or biased by any mercenary or sinister motives,—with amazement and grief. The Report of the Grammar committee, from which we have quoted so largely, leaves no doubt of the humiliating fact. The committee have not sent out their conjectures, or their opinion merely,—had they done so, it would have been denied and denounced by acclamation,—but they have presented the data from which the fact is deducible with mathematical certainty. The same printed questions were submitted to several schools in the vicinity of Boston that were submitted to the Boston schools; and the committee have placed on file the answers received from one

school in the contiguous town of Roxbury; so that the results may be compared, by any one who has the interest or the curiosity to do so. If the mode of examination were new, it was as new in the one case as in the other. If any allowance is to be made, because the children were taken by surprise, the children of the schools out of the city are as much entitled to that allowance as those in it;—nay more, because the former were examined by strangers,—by persons coming from another place, where the schools had enjoyed a high reputation,—and therefore it would be natural that they should be somewhat alarmed and disconcerted. A tabular view of the answers received by the committee from the Dudley School, in Roxbury, has been incorporated into their Report; and respecting this school, the committee say, "We consider the Dudley School a *fair* sample of the *best* schools in our neighborhood." How then does a "fair sample" of the "best schools" out of the city compare with the Grammar Schools in it? A few facts will answer the question. In Geography, the highest per centage of correct answers in any of the Boston Grammar Schools, was 46 per cent.; the lowest, (excluding the colored school, where it was only 11,) was 18 per cent. The per centage of correct answers in the Dudley School, in the same study, was 55 per cent.,—an excess of 37 per cent. over the lowest of the Boston schools for white children, and of 9 per cent. over the highest.

In History, two of the Boston schools excelled the Dudley, while fifteen fell below it,—some of them not giving one quarter of the per centage of correct answers which was given by the Dudley School.

In Definitions also, two of the Boston schools gave a higher per centage of correct answers than the Dudley, but fifteen a lower per centage. And it is to be remarked, that the words selected for definition in the Boston schools were taken from the reading books used by the children in these schools; whereas, in the Dudley School, a different reading book was used. This demonstrates a vast difference in the general intelligence of the readers.

In Natural Philosophy, not one of the Boston schools gave a higher per centage of correct answers than the Dudley; one only gave the same per centage; sixteen gave a less one!

But, without dwelling longer upon details, the startling result of a comparison between the Boston schools, and a "fair sample" of the "best schools" of the same grade out of the city, is this: If the *mean* of the merits or comparative excellence of the Boston schools be represented by the decimal fraction .0769, the merits of the Dudley School must be represented by the fraction .1544;—that is, the average rank of the Boston schools is not quite one half that of the Dudley School!

Without attempting a full explanation of this astounding fact, we would observe, that we do not attribute it wholly to the incompetent teaching of the masters. There are two or three efficient causes in producing this sad result, for which they are not responsible.

1. We would first notice, as one of these causes, the organi-

zation of the schools into two departments, with a separate and independent head over each. In one department, there is a Grammar Master, (so called,) who has the sole charge of orthography, reading, grammar, geography and history, to which, if he pleases, he may add natural philosophy and astronomy; and, in the other department, there is a Writing Master, (so called,) who has charge of arithmetic and hand-writing, with perhaps a little of algebra, geometry, and book-keeping. The children pass from one master to the other each half day.

A system which gives two heads to one body is, at least, unnatural. Nature rarely exhibits such a production in the whole animal kingdom; and when she does, all mankind, by common consent, call it monstrous. A phenomenon of this kind, too, is as rare in civil society, as in the works of creation. Survey the history of civilized man, and how few the instances where two heads have been given to the same body, whether that body were social, civil or military. Any such system or plan, therefore, may be considered as being repugnant to the common sense of mankind,—as it is clearly contradictory to all the analogies of nature. Can any reason be given in favor of two heads for a school, which would not be equally persuasive and convincing in favor of two presidents for a college, or two governors for a Commonwealth? No navies sail with two admirals; no armies march with two commanders. When Rome tried this, she lost the battle of Cannæ.

But the argument does not stop with such generalizations. A close inspection reveals objections of a formidable character. It has become a proverb, that when responsibility is divided, it is diminished;—that is, if we understand it, the sum or aggregate of responsibility felt by its several sharers, will be less than that felt by a single one of them, were the whole of it stringently fastened upon him. As the reason of this exists in human nature, its results may be considered as certain and uniform. If one man can shift the blame or the penalties for neglect upon another, one of the great inducements to fidelity is removed. The mass of men will perform labor to save themselves,—to save their own character or their own office,—which they will not perform to save the office or character of another. Hence, whenever responsibility can be shifted, the motives to exertion and fidelity are weakened.

Let us suppose two heads to a school, each of whom is held responsible for certain prescribed studies, and for those only. In the first place, we would observe, that it is almost as preposterous to divide and separate the Common School studies from each other, and to carry forward one set in one room and under one instructor, and another set in another room and under another instructor, as it would be to divide a tree or a plant into its two halves, and to cultivate each half in different gardens and under different horticulturists. Many of the studies are so connected together that they cannot be torn asunder without fatal injury to each. Suppose, for instance, that chi-rography is assigned to one department, and English grammar, or, more comprehensively, the English language, is assigned to

another. Chirography embraces the mechanical formation of letters in writing a coarse or a fine, a plain or an ornamental hand. Spelling, punctuation, the proper capitalizing of letters, with the construction of sentences, come under the head of Written Language. As soon as a child can write legibly, he should be put to writing simple sentences from memory, or from dictation; and, as a part of this exercise, he should be taught spelling, syllabication, punctuation, the rules for capitalizing both prose and poetry, &c. Whoever is responsible for the whole instruction of a child, in both hand-writing and language, will attend to all these things together. He will not accept of beautiful hand-writing, deformed by errors in spelling, &c.; nor will he accept of correct spelling, in a hand with difficulty legible. Being interested in all, he will, at the same time, aim at perfection in all. But if responsible only for a part, he will, unless he be a very extraordinary man, attend mainly, or only, to that part for which he is responsible. Of course, the pupil's attainments will be diminished as the teacher's instructions are withheld. Now, is it wise to place two teachers in a position, where one of them may say, "I am not responsible for any violation of the rules of orthography and grammar, provided they are committed in a fair and legible hand;" and where the other may say, "It is my duty to teach spelling, grammar, &c., but whether the laws of language are obeyed in a hand-writing that any one can read, belongs, not to my department, but to that of another." The truth is, in teaching any one of these branches, all the connected ones should be kept constantly in view. In composition, the elegance, or, at least, the legibility of the hand-writing should be regarded; and in hand-writing, it is a wicked waste of time to confine children, year after year, to copy-books. After a certain stage has passed,—and that not a very late one,—hand-writing should be made the common and everyday means of acquiring and reducing to practice, a knowledge of orthography, syllabication, punctuation, capitalizing, and the construction of sentences. The late examination of the Boston Grammar and Writing Schools, has demonstrated for the thousandth time,—though perhaps more fully than ever before,—that children who have been kept in their copy-books until they can write a fair and legible hand, will, if required to write down sentences of their own construction, produce the most illegible and disgraceful scrawls. We hesitate not to say, that in all the schools of Massachusetts we have ever visited, we have never seen so great a proportion of disreputable specimens of hand-writing, and of errors in spelling and punctuation, as in the children's answers, now on file in the office of the city clerk. It is evident from an inspection of these that the kindred exercises in *hand-writing* and in *written language* had not been properly combined in *one exercise*. Had this been so, the errors in grammar, in punctuation and in spelling, would not have amounted to thousands and tens of thousands, in the answers of only five hundred children.*

* The errors in grammar were 2,801; in spelling, 3,733; and in punctuation, 35,947.

Not only are there the strongest reasons against this violent severing of the studies, and making one master wholly responsible for one part, and another for another part of kindred subjects; but if the subjects must be divided at all, the division made in the Boston Grammar and Writing Schools is a most unfortunate one. Hand-writing should go with orthography, punctuation, grammar, (in its limited sense,) and composition, wherever these may go, because it is one of the most important aids and concomitants in the acquisition of them all. It bears a much closer relation to them than to geography, or even to arithmetic. And yet, in the absurd distribution of studies between the two departments, hand-writing has been put with arithmetic, while the latter has been separated from natural philosophy and astronomy.

Let us give one more illustration of the impolicy of taking, from a single head, the general responsibility of superintending all the common branches. One department of geography is closely allied to mathematics; history is indissolubly connected with geography; and geography and chronology have been called the two eyes of history. Now, if there must be a division in the school, and a separate head placed over each department, mathematical geography would belong more appropriately to the Writing department, and physical and political geography to the Grammar department. But this would lead to the dividing of geography itself; and thus, subjects having a mutual and natural relationship and dependence would be estranged from each other to their common detriment. We remember once asking a master whether he did not illustrate a certain geographical topic so and so. His reply was, "That belongs to the other department." In children so taught, there will be a blank stripe running all along through their minds, where the two departments approach each other.

It is well known that division of labor increases manual skill and dexterity. It is as well known that it diminishes the capacity for generalization and arrangement. Hence the practical rule has been this: Division of labor as much as possible among *work-men*, but as little as possible among *head-men*. Look over England and our own country,—places where the sagacity of men has been most sharpened; and, in all business operations, has not a single man always been put at the head of affairs. Even the Fächer system recognizes this principle, for there, too, one responsible person is placed at the head. Some very wise men,—Bishop Potter among the number,—have objected even to this system, because of its too great subdivision of labor *among the assistants*.

But the natural consequences of an equal division of responsibility and of authority are far more disastrous in a moral than in an intellectual point of view. We hold that the office of a school teacher will never become what it ought to be and what it may be, until the teacher considers himself, to a very great extent, responsible for the exemplary conduct and the correct moral deportment of his pupils. We care not how promptly or perfectly children may recite in the schoolroom, if, when we

follow them into the street or the play-ground, we hear profane language from their lips, or witness the evidences of a quarrelsome disposition in their actions, or observe a harsh and unkind bearing of the great towards the small, of the old towards the young, or of the strong towards the weak. Where such vices exist, the school has not accomplished one of its highest purposes. And where children have been for a succession of years under the same teacher, and still are found to be profane or obscene, unkind towards equals or tyrannical towards inferiors, the facts point to a deficiency, on the part of the teacher, in the discharge of his moral duties. But, where there are two teachers, how can the responsibility be fastened upon either? Now, and for a long time to come, even in Massachusetts, the school teacher must be a school missionary. He must be familiar with the poorest house and the poorest family in his district. If a child is idle, or mischievous, or refractory, *in school*, the teacher must visit his parents *out of school*. Their coöperation in reforming their child must be sought, not merely by words, but by acts of kindness and interest; and these solicitations must be so importunate that the most unjust parent will be constrained to yield to them,—if from no higher motive, yet, like the unjust judge, to be rid of the importunity. A schoolmaster cannot work upon the six-hour system, nor upon the ten-hour system; but he may think himself fortunate, if, in preparing himself to meet his pupils and in preparing his pupils for the school, he is not obliged to work as many hours in a week out of school as in it. While society remains as at present, every teacher has a sort of parochial duty to perform. He is to explain to the ignorant members of his district, the benefits and the blessings of education, and he is to win over the parents to become his allies in the government of his school. His zeal must compensate for their indifference; his fidelity for their neglect. To instruct the beautiful, the affectionate, the bright-minded, the grateful, would be unalloyed delight. But to take an unclean, ill-dressed, ill-mannered, ill-tempered child, and to work up an interest in it, to love it, to caress it, and to perform a double measure of duty towards it;—this draws upon all the resources of conscience, virtue and religion. Yet, in the eye of true benevolence, of Christian duty, such children are the dearest of objects,—the first to be attended to, the last to be forgotten. Wherever teachers have been guided by such a principle, and animated by such a spirit as this,—and we have known many such,—all obstacles to progress have stood aside, all difficulties in government have vanished.

Now, in which system,—the double-headed or the single,—will such a state of things, or an approximation to such a state of things, be most easily secured? The faithful teacher, under the single-headed system, will feel all the responsibility, and will also enjoy the whole reward of his labors. Under the double-headed system, each one will feel, at most, but half the responsibility; and he will know, whatever labors he may perform, or sacrifices he may make, that his colleague, however neglectful or selfish, will be an equal sharer in their benefits.

These are some of the natural consequences of such a division of a school. Its obvious tendency is to reduce the attainments of the pupils. It is doubtless *one* reason for the present deplorable condition of the Boston Grammar and Writing schools. So far as this cause has been operative, the masters should be absolved from responsibility for their condition, and for their great inferiority to other schools in the neighborhood.

2. Neither would we hold the masters wholly responsible for the prominent rank which Emulation holds in their schools, as one of the incentives to study. This motive-power is incorporated into the system in which they work, and all that they can do is to mitigate its evils, by their administration of it. Yet we believe it to be one of the causes for the average low character of the schools. Not only the reason and philosophy of the thing, but actual experiment, in a vast number of cases, has demonstrated that the *average* standing of a school, even in an intellectual point of view, will be degraded by the use of emulation,—that is, by mating the children against each other, to study for a prize. If one or a few children make greater progress, under its sharp goadings, many will be discouraged, and will make less. Hence many teachers, who once plied this motive to the uttermost, have abandoned it; and we have never heard of a single instance where any one, who had made a full and fair trial of both methods, has chosen to continue or to resume it. But until the views of the school committee shall be changed, the masters must continue to suffer for the evils of a system they are required to administer.

3. But, in the third place, no one can look carefully into the details of this examination without discovering an accumulation and redundancy of evidence in support of the declaration made by both of the committees, that the children have been superficially taught. There is a painful superabundance of proof, that the children have experienced but little of the highest, and indeed the only valuable kind of instruction,—an indoctrination into principles. For the benefit of other schools, and for the warning of other teachers, in the State, we proceed to point out a few particulars.

Take, for instance, the question in geography, "On which range of mountains is the line of perpetual snow most elevated above the ocean,—on the Rocky Mountains of North America, or on the Cordilleras of Mexico?"—and it appears that only 91 pupils answered the question correctly; while 154 answered it wrong, and 242 did not answer it at all, being either ignorant of the meaning of the terms used, or unable to form any conclusion respecting the fact. Now this precise question may never have been put to the classes before, and we should not feel disposed to blame a teacher, even if it could be proved that he had never propounded this particular question to his scholars. But, that children who have professedly studied geography for years, and who have recited in anything but the most parrot-like manner, should not have discovered the principles which would lead them inevitably to the correct decision of such a question, is wholly inconceivable. That less than one

in five,—less than 20 per cent.,—of the flower of the Boston Grammar schools, should have been ignorant of the true answer to such a question, and ignorant also of the principles which would conduct them to it, almost transcends credibility. It proves conclusively that the great majority of the children must have committed to memory the names of the zones, without any adequate conception of the different temperatures belonging to each; that all their recitations about the sun's altitude and declination, must have been unconnected with any idea of the calorific effects of his more or less vertical rays, and that the varieties of climate and of vegetation, of cold and of heat, had never been considered in connection with their natural causes.

Take another almost incredible case. One question was, "Do the waters of Lake Erie run into Lake Ontario, or the waters of Ontario into Erie?" This was answered correctly by 287, but incorrectly by 130, and 72 did not know which way they run. Yet this was one of the questions for guessing, and one where an ignorant child would be as likely to guess right as to guess wrong. Now, independently of the world-wide renown of Niagara, one grand idea, which, in teaching the geography of North America, should no more be omitted than the name, North America, itself, would have prevented this exhibition of ignorance and error. Ten minutes' explanation respecting the great central table-land of North America, from whose four vast slopes, the four great rivers flow onwards towards the four cardinal points of the compass,—ten minutes' explanation, we say, of this great fact, given in so graphic a manner that the children should see these grand declivities as plainly as they can see the four sides of the hip-roof of a house; and then, the tracing down of the course of the waters in each direction, until they are lost in their respective oceans,—would have made it impossible for any child, even of the most moderate capacity, to have ever committed such a blunder. Any child, even of ordinary powers, is capable of conceiving this grand scene, if it be vividly described to him, shown upon the maps, and pictured out upon the black-board; and having once conceived it, he never can forget it. It will then only be necessary to commit to memory the names of the great lakes, in their order from west to east, which can be learned as easily and remembered as tenaciously as the order of the letters in the alphabet. But if the lakes are considered only in connection with the States which they bound, or within whose limits they lie; if the learner does not draw them upon the black-board, and never sees them drawn upon the black-board, it is no wonder that their names should lie confusedly in his memory, and that, notwithstanding all the fame of Niagara, he should make the waters run up hill, or be ignorant of the fact that there is any running water there.

[To be continued.]

[THE COMMON SCHOOL JOURNAL is published semi-monthly, by WILLIAM B. FOWLE AND N. CAPEN, No. 138½ Washington Street, up stairs, (opposite School Street.) BOSTON. HORACE MANN, Editor. Price, One Dollar a year, payable in advance.]